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tapol
British Campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia

MEMO

10 November 1986

Memo to East Timor Solidarity Groups

Urgent action to help the four East Timorese students in Jakarta

TAPOL proposes that we launch a joint action to speed up a solution for the four East Timorese students in Jakarta who are seeking asylum in Portugal.

The objective

To exert pressure on the Portuguese Government through Portuguese embassies in a number of capitals, urging that passports be issued to the students without delay and safe conduct be arranged for them to leave Jakarta for Lisbon.

The action

To enhance the impact, we propose that groups in a number of countries organise an action at the same time, on the morning of Friday, 14 November, in front of the Portuguese Embassy. Two alternatives can be considered, depending on the ability of respective groups and the time for preparation.

Either, a delegation should request a meeting with the Portuguese ambassador or available diplomat to deliver a petition, demanding an explanation of the delay so far in issuing passports, and urging that passports be issued without further delay. Or, a delegation should visit the Embassy to submit a petition while a picket line with posters keeps vigil outside the Embassy.

Slogans should concentrate on Portugal's responsibilities towards East Timor and its duty to assist the four students whose lives are in danger as long as they remain in Jakarta.

Where possible, delegations that visit the Embassy should include representatives of various organisations and not consist only of East Timor solidarity groups.

In meetings with Portuguese diplomats, we should show concern and anger over Lisbon's failure to resolve the question of passports and enable the students to leave Jakarta. We should stress Portugal's responsibilities, under international law, to protect the interests of the subjects of a territory that is still recognised by the UN as being under Portuguese administrative control. We should also demand a written reply from the Portuguese Government.

It is important to inform the press beforehand, emphasising that this is a Europe-wide action, so as to enhance its news-worthiness.

Additional information

For those groups who may not have followed developments so far, we enclose some recent clippings. We also enclose a copy of a letter we sent to the Portuguese Foreign Minister today, to give you some idea of points to raise in your petition. This is an extra action we are taking, since the Foreign Minister happens to be visiting London.

If you are unable to take action on 14 November, please let us know by phone when your group is likely to take action as part of this campaign.

If any developments take place between now and Friday that might affect the nature of this campaign, we will contact you by phone or telex.

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